



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & WELFARE

DIRK KEMPTHORNE – Governor
KARL B. KURTZ – Director

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
450 West State Street, 10th Floor
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720-0036
PHONE 208-334-5625
FAX 208-334-0668

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Tom Shanahan
(208) 334-0668

PIP, PIP Hooray! Federal Officials Recognize Idaho Efforts to Improve State's Child Welfare Program

Health and Human Services officials will visit Boise on Friday, May 5th, to recognize the tremendous improvements made by Idaho's Child Welfare Program which helps children and families who are struggling. The improvements are the result of completion of Idaho's Program Improvement Plan, commonly referred to as the PIP.

Three years ago, all states went through a week-long, rigorous review of their state child welfare systems, which includes the foster care and adoption programs. From this review, each state developed a federally approved two-year Program Improvement Plan, or PIP. Idaho is one of the few states to successfully complete its PIP within the two year timeframe. A celebration for the completed plan with visiting federal officials will be held Friday, 1:30 p.m., at the J.R. Williams Building, 700 East State St., 3rd Floor West Conference Room.

"We are very proud of our staff and community partners who worked tirelessly over the last two years," says Ken Deibert, Family and Community Services Administrator for the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. "We didn't just meet the goals of the PIP, we exceeded them at almost every level. Children suffering from abuse and families who are struggling are benefiting from the hard work and dedication of everyone involved."

(more)

Several of the achievements in the Idaho PIP include:

- The timeliness of child protection investigations improved from 74 percent of cases receiving timely investigations to 100 percent of cases;
- Ninety-four percent of foster care placements are stable, meaning children are not shuffled from one foster home to another. This improved from 76 percent in 2003, and exceeds the national standard of 83%; and
- Improvement of in-home services for families to help prevent the removal of a child to foster care improved from 78 percent to 98 percent, well-above the targeted 87 percent goal.

Other accomplishments include the enhancement of a training academy for new social workers and improvement of the automated system that tracks cases. Deibert points out that many community groups contributed to Idaho's success, including Casey Family Programs, Boise State and Eastern Washington Universities, and the Supreme Court Child Protection Committee.

Deibert out that the improvements for the child welfare program were implemented during a difficult time due to tremendous growth in child welfare cases. In SFY 2003, there were 2,383 children placed in foster care. This increased 34 percent by SFY 2005, reaching almost 3,200 children. Deibert attributes much of this increase to the use of drugs, especially methamphetamine, along with the state's population growth. "This was a tremendous effort by child welfare advocates in partnership with the continued support of the Governor and Legislature for quality child welfare services," he said. "We are very proud of this accomplishment."

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(Editors: For more information, please contact Tom Shanahan at 334-0668.)